

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Previously Presented) An occupant detection system for a motor vehicle, comprising:

a first occupant detection device which is arranged in a vehicle seat;
and

a second occupant detection device; wherein

the second occupant detection device comprises a first electrode arranged in the vehicle seat and a second electrode arranged in a foot well associated with the vehicle seat;

an electrical coupling variable associated with the two electrodes is determined by means of an electrical field applied between the electrodes; and

the electrical coupling variable and a variable which is determined by the first occupant detection device are used to determine whether the vehicle occupant is a child, whose legs do not extend to the vehicle floor, or whether the

vehicle occupant is an occupant whose legs extend to a vehicle floor in said foot well.

Claim 2. (Original) The occupant detection system according to Claim 1, wherein the electrical coupling variable is an electrical capacitance , which is associated with a capacitor formed by the first electrode arranged in the seat and the second electrode arranged in the foot well.

Claim 3. (Original) The occupant detection system according to Claim 1, wherein the first electrode, which is arranged in the seat, is a part of the first occupant detection device.

Claim 4. (Original) The occupant detection system according to Claim 3, wherein the second electrode of the second occupant detection device is a part of a third occupant detection device, which is arranged in the foot well.

Claim 5. (Previously Presented) The occupant detection system according to Claim 3, wherein the first electrode is arranged in a region within approximately 2 cm below the seat surface.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) A method for determining whether a vehicle occupant is a child whose legs do not extend to the floor of the vehicle, said method comprising:

providing a first occupant detection device arranged in a seat of said vehicle;

providing a second occupant detection device comprising a first electrode arranged in the vehicle seat and a second electrode arranged in a foot well associated with the vehicle seat;

applying an electric field between the two electrodes of the second occupant detection device;

determining a coupling variable associated with the two electrodes by sensing the electric field;

using the electric coupling variable and a variable determined by the first occupant detection device to determine the size of an occupant of the vehicle seat.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the electrical coupling variable is an electrical capacitance , which is associated with a capacitor formed by the first electrode arranged in the seat and the second electrode arranged in the foot well.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the first electrode, which is arranged in the seat, is a part of the first occupant detection device.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 8, wherein the second electrode of the second occupant detection device is a part of a third occupant detection device, which is arranged in the foot well.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 8, wherein the first electrode is arranged in a region within about 2 cm below the seat surface.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented) An occupant detection system for a vehicle, comprising:

a first occupant detection device arranged in a vehicle seat;

a second occupant detection device comprising a first electrode arranged in the vehicle seat and a second electrode arranged in a floor well associated with the vehicle seat;

an evaluation device, including means for generating an electric field between said first and second electrodes, and means for detecting an interaction between said electric field and a body of an occupant of said seat, by

determining a value of an electric coupling variable that is indicative of electric coupling between said first and second electrodes, which electric coupling variable characterizes said body based on said interaction;

wherein, the electric coupling variable is used with a variable determined by said first occupant detection device, to determine whether the vehicle occupant's legs extend to a floor of the vehicle in said foot well.

Claim 12. (Previously Presented) The occupant detection system according to Claim 11, wherein the first electrode forms an electric component that is common to both the first and second occupant detection devices.

Claim 13. (Previously Presented) The occupant detection system according to Claim 12, wherein the second electrode forms an electric component that is common to both the second occupant detection device and a third occupant detection device.

Claim 14. (Previously Presented) The occupant detection system according to Claim 12, wherein each of said first and third occupant selection devices comprises one of a pressure sensitive device and a weight sensitive device.

Claim 15. (New) An occupant detection system for a motor vehicle, comprising:

a first electrode arranged in the vehicle seat;

a second electrode arranged in a foot well associated with the vehicle seat; wherein,

an electrical coupling variable associated with the two electrodes is determined by means of an electrical field applied between the electrodes; and

the electrical coupling variable is used to determine whether an occupant of the vehicle seat is an occupant whose legs do not extend to a vehicle floor in said foot well, or whether the vehicle occupant is an occupant whose legs do extend to the vehicle floor in said foot well.

Claim 16. (New) The occupant detection system according to Claim 15, wherein the electrical coupling variable is an electrical capacitance , which is associated with a capacitor formed by the first electrode arranged in the seat and the second electrode arranged in the foot well.

Claim 17. (New) The occupant detection system according to Claim 16, wherein the first electrode is arranged in a region within approximately 2 cm below the seat surface.